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ENCYCLICAL LETTER

OR

OUR HOLY FATHER

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE

POPE LEO XIII.

ON

THE CONDITION OF LABOR

OFFICIAL TRANSLATION.

TO OUR VENERABLE BRETHREN,
ALL PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES, ARCH-
BISHOPS, AND BISHOPS OF THE
CATHOLIC WORLD,
IN GRACE AND COMMUNION WITH THE
APOSTOLIC SEE,
POPE LEO XIII.

VENERABLE BRETHREN,
HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION.

It is not surprising that the spirit of revolutionary change, which has long been predominant in the nations of the world, should have passed beyond politics and made its influence felt in the cognate field of practical economy. The elements of a conflict are unmistakable: the growth of industry, and the surprising discoveries of science; the changed relations of masters and workmen; the enormous fortunes of individuals, and the poverty of the masses; the increased self-reliance and the closer mutual combination of the working population; and, finally, a general lowering of moral tone. The momentous character of the present state of things just now fills every mind with painful apprehension; wise men discuss it; practical men practice it; popular meetings, legislatures, and sovereign princes, all are occupied with it—and there is nothing which has a deeper hold on public attention.

Therefore, Venerable Brethren, as on former occasions, when it seemed opportune to refute false teaching, We have addressed you in the interests of the Church and of the common weal, and

have issued Letters on Political Power, ~~etc~~
Human Liberty, on the Christian Con-
stitution of the State, and on similar sub-
jects, so now We have thought it useful
to speak on

The Condition of Labor.

It is a matter on which We have spoken once or twice already. But in this Letter the responsibility of the Apostolate urges Us to treat the question expeditiously, and at length, in order that there may be no mistake as to the principles which truth and justice dictate for its settling. The discussion is not easy, nor is it free from danger. It is not easy to define the relative rights and the mutual duties of the wealthy and of the poor, of capital and of labor. And the danger lies in this, that crafty agitators constantly make use of these disputes to pervert men's judgments and to stir up the people.

But all agree, and there can be no question whatever, that some remedy must be found, and quickly found, for the suffering and wretchedness which prevails here at this moment on the large portion of the very poor. The ancient working Guilds were destroyed in the last century, and no other organization has taken their place. Public institutions and the law have repudiated the ancient religion. Hence, by degrees it has come to pass that Working Men have been given over, isolated and defenceless, to the callousness of employers and the greed of unrestrained competition. The evil has been increased by rapacious Usury, which, although more than once condemned by the

Church, is nevertheless, under a different form but with the same guilt, still practised by avaricious and grasping men. And to this must be added the custom of working by contract, and the concentration of so many branches of trade in the hands of a few individuals, so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better than slavery itself.

Socialists and Private Property.

To remedy these evils the Socialists, working on the poor man's envy of the rich, endeavor to destroy private property, and maintain that individual possessions should become the common property of all, to be administered by the State or by municipal bodies. They hold that, by thus transferring property from private persons to the community, the present evil state of things will be set to rights, because each citizen will then have his equal share of whatever there is to enjoy. But their proposals are so clearly futile for all practical purposes, that if they were carried out the working man himself would be among the first to suffer. Moreover they are emphatically unjust, because they would rob the lawful possessor, bring the State into a sphere that is not its own, and cause complete confusion in the community.

It is surely undeniable that, when a man engages in remunerative labor, the very reason and motive of his work is to obtain property, and to hold it as his own private possession. If one man hires out to another his strength or his industry, he does this for the purpose of receiving in return what is necessary for food and living; he thereby expressly proposes to acquire a full and real right, not only to the remuneration, but also to the disposal of that remuneration as he pleases. Thus, if he lives sparingly, saves money, and invests his savings, for greater security, in land, the land in such a case is only his *wages* in another form; and, consequently, a working man's little estate thus acquired should be as completely at his disposal as the wages he receives for his labor. But it is precisely in this power of disposal that ownership consists, whether the property be land or movable goods. The Socialists, therefore, in endeavoring to transfer the possessions of individuals to the community, strike at the interests of every wage-earner, for they deprive him of the liberty of disposing of his wages, and thus of all hope

and possibility of increasing his stock and of bettering his condition in life.

Man's Natural Right to Private Property.

What is of still greater importance, however, is that the *motive* they propose is manifestly against justice. For every man has by nature the right to possess property as his own. This is one of the chief points of distinction between man and the animal creation. For the brute has no power of self-selection, but is governed by two chief instincts, which keep his powers alert, move him to use his strength, and determine him to action without the power of choice. These instincts are self-preservation and the propagation of the species. Both can attain their purpose by means of things which are close at hand; beyond their surroundings the brute creation cannot go, for they are moved to action by sensibility alone, and by the things which sense perceives. But with man it is different indeed. He possesses, on the one hand, the full perfection of animal nature, and therefore he enjoys, at least, as much as the rest of the animal race, the fruition of the things of the body. But animality, however perfect, is far from being the whole of humanity, and is indeed humanity's humble handmaid, made to serve and obey. It is the mind, or the reason, which is the chief thing in us who are human beings; it is this which makes a human being human, and distinguishes him essentially and completely from the brute. And on this account — viz., that man alone among animals possesses reason — it must be within his right to have things not merely for temporary and momentary use, as other living beings have them, but in stable and permanent possession; he must have not only things which perish in the using, but also those which, though used, remain for use in the future.

This becomes still more clearly evident if we consider man's nature a little more deeply. For man, comprehending by the power of his reason things innumerable, and joining the future with the present — being, moreover, the master of his own acts — governs himself by the foresight of his counsels, under the eternal law and the power of God Whose Providence governs all things. Wherefore it is in his power to exercise his choice not only on things which regard his present welfare, but also on those which will be for his advantage in time to come. Hence man not only



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can possess the fruits of the earth, certain obsolete opinions should now be but also the earth itself; for of the revived in opposition to what is here laid products of the earth he can make provision for the future. Man's needs do not die out, but recur; satisfied to-day, they demand new supplies to-morrow. Nature, it is unjust for any one to possess as therefore, owes to man a storhouse that shall never fail, the daily supply of his daily wants. And this he finds only in the inexhaustible fertility of the earth.

Nor must we, at this stage, have recourse to the State.

Man is Older than the State;

And he holds the right of providing for the life of his body prior to the formation of any State. And to say that God has given the earth to the use and enjoyment of the universal human race is not to deny that there can be private property. For God has granted the earth to mankind in general; not in the sense that all without distinction can deal with it as they please, but rather that no part of it has been assigned to any one in particular, and that the limits of private possession have been left to be fixed by man's own industry and the laws of individual peoples. Moreover the earth, though divided among private owners, ceases not thereby to minister to the needs of all; for there is no one who does not live on what the land brings forth. Those who do not possess the soil, contribute their labor; so that it may be truly said that all human subsistence is derived either from labor on one's own land, or from some laborious industry which is paid for either in the produce of the land itself or in that which is exchanged for what the land brings forth.

Here, again, we have another proof that private ownership is according to nature's law. For that which is required for the preservation of life, and for life's well-being, is produced in great abundance by the earth, but not until man has brought it into cultivation and lavished upon it his care and skill. Now, when man thus spends the industry of his mind and the strength of his body in procuring the fruits of nature, by that act he makes his own that portion of nature's field which he cultivates—that portion on which he leaves, as it were, the impress of his own personality; and it cannot but be just that he should possess that portion as his own, and should have a right to keep it without molestation.

These arguments are so strong and convincing that it seems surprising that

down. We are told that it is right for private persons to have the use of the soil and the fruits of their land, but that owner either the land on which he has built or the estate which he has cultivated. But those who assert this do not perceive that they are robbing man of what his own labor has produced. For the soil which is tilled and cultivated with toil and skill utterly changes its condition; it was wild before, it is now fruitful; it was barren, and now it brings forth in abundance. That which has thus altered and improved it becomes so truly part of itself as to be in great measure indistinguishable and inseparable from it. Is it just that the fruit of a man's sweat and labor should be enjoyed by another? As effects follow their cause, so it is just and right that the results of labor should belong to him who has labored.

With reason, therefore, the common opinion of mankind, little affected by the few dissentients who have maintained the opposite view, has found in the study of nature, and in the law of Nature herself, the foundations of the division of property, and has consecrated by the practice of all ages the principle of private ownership, as being pre-eminently in conformity with human nature, and a conducting in the most unassailable manner to the peace and tranquility of human life. The same principle is confirmed and enforced by the civil laws—laws which, as long as they are just, derive their binding force from the law of nature. The authority of the Divine Law adds its sanction, forbidding us in the gravest terms even to covet that which is another's:—*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife; nor his house, nor his field, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, . . . anything which is his.*¹

Man's Natural Right and His Social and Domestic Duties.

The rights here spoken of, belonging to each individual man, are seen in much stronger light if they are considered in relation to man's social and domestic obligations.

In choosing a state of life, it is indisputable that all are at full liberty either to follow the counsel of Jesus Christ as

¹ Deuteronomy v. 21.

to virginity, or to enter into the bonds of marriage. No human law can abolish the natural and primitive right of marriage, or in any way limit the chief and principal purpose of marriage, ordained by God's authority from the beginning. *Caro et multiplo.*¹ Thus we have the Family; the "society" of a man's own household; a society limited indeed in numbers, but a true "society," anterior to every kind of State or nation, with rights and duties of its own, totally independent of the commonwealth.

That right of property, therefore, which has been proved to belong naturally to individual persons, must also belong to a man in his capacity of head of a family; nay, such a person must possess this right so much the more clearly in proportion as his position multiplies his duties. For it is a most sacred law of nature that a father must provide food and all necessities for those whom he has begotten; and similarly, nature dictates that a man's children, who carry on, as it were, and continue his own personality, should be provided by him with all that is needful to enable them honorably to keep themselves from want and misery in the uncertainties of this mortal life. Now in no other way can a father effect this except by the ownership of profitable property, which he can transmit to his children by inheritance. A family, no less than a State, is, as We have said, a true society, governed by a power within itself, that is to say, by the father. Wherefore, provided the limits be not transgressed which are prescribed by the very purposes for which it exists, the Family has, at least, equal rights with the State in the choice and pursuit of those things which are proper to its preservation and its just liberty.

We say, at least equal rights; for since the domestic household is anterior both in time and in fact to the gathering of men into a commonwealth, the former has, over the latter, rights and a dignity which are peculiar to it, and which render it, in many respects, more honorable, of course, if the citizens of a State — that is to say, — if they — consider the natural sentiment and fellowship, experienced in the woods or the State hindrance in need of help, and fearing their rights violated instead of being protected, such association were rather to be repudiated than sought after.

¹ Genesis i. 28.

The State May Not Abolish nor Absorb Paternal Rights.

The idea, then, that the civil government should, at its own discretion, penetrate and pervade the family and the household, is a great and pernicious mistake. True, if a family finds itself in great difficulty, utterly friendless, and without prospect of help, it is right that extreme necessity be met by public aid; for each family is a part of the commonwealth. In like manner, if within the walls of the household there occur grave disturbance of mutual rights, the public power must interfere to force each party to give the other what is due; for this is not to rob citizens of their rights, but justly and properly to safeguard and strengthen them. But the rulers of the State must go no further: nature bids them stop here. Paternal authority can neither be abolished by the State, nor absorbed; for it has the same source as human life itself; "The child belongs to the father," and is, as it were, the continuation of the father's personality; and, to speak with strictures, the child takes its place in civil society not in its own right, but in its quality as a member of the family in which it is begotten. And it is for the very reason that "the child belongs to the father" that, as St. Thomas of Aquin says, "before it attains the use of free-will, it is in the power and care of its parents."¹ The Socialist, therefore, in setting aside the *pater*, and introducing the *prudentia* of the State, acts *against natural justice*, and thence the very existence of family life.

And such interference is not only unjust, but is quite certain to harm and distract all classes of citizens, and to subject them to odious and intolerable slavery. It would open the door to envy, to ill-speaking, and to quarrelling; the source of wealth would themselves run dry, for no one would have any interest in exerting his talents or his industry; and the ideal equality of which so much is said would, in reality, be the levelling down of all to the sure condition of misery and disonor.

Thus it is clear that the main tenet of Socialism, the commonalty of goods, must be utterly rejected; for it would injure those whom it is intended to benefit; it would be contrary to the natural rights of mankind, and it would introduce confusion and disorder into the commonwealth.

¹ St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, 2125 Q. 8 Art. 12.

Our first and most fundamental principle, therefore, when we undertake to alleviate the condition of the masses, must be the inviolability of private property. This laid down, We go on to show where we must find the remedy that we seek.

The Church Alone Can Solve the Social Problem.

We approach the subject with confidence, and in the exercise of the rights which belong to Us. For no practical solution of this question will ever be found without the assistance of Religion and of the Church. It is We who are the chief guardian of Religion, and the chief dispenser of what belongs to the Church, and we must not by silence neglect the duty which lies upon Us. Doubtless this most serious question demands the attention and the efforts of others besides Ourselves — of the rulers of States, of employers of labor, of the wealthy, and of the working population themselves for whom We plead. But We affirm without hesitation, that all the striving of men will be vain if they leave out the Church. It is the Church that proclaims from the Gospel those teachings by which the conflict can be put an end to, or at least made far less bitter; the Church uses its efforts not only to enlighten the mind, but to direct by its precepts the life and conduct of men; the Church improves and ameliorates the condition of the working man by numerous useful organizations; does its best to enlist the services of all ranks in discerning and endeavoring to meet, in the most practical way, the claims of the working classes; and acts on the decided view that for these purposes recourse should be had, in due measure and degree, to the help of the law and of State authority.

Let us laid down, in the first place, that humanity can remain as it is. It is impossible to reduce human society to a level. The Socialists may do their utmost to do so. Striving against nature is futile. There naturally exist among mankind all the differences of the most important kind; people differ in capacity, in abilities, in talents, in dispositions, and inequality there is a necessary result of inequality in condition. Such inequality is far from being disadvantageous either to individuals or to the community; social and public life can only go on by the help of various kinds of capacity and the playing of many parts, and each man, as a rule, chooses the part which peculi-

arly suits his case. As regards bodily labor, even had man never fallen from the state of innocence, he would not have been wholly unoccupied; but that which would then have been his free choice and his delight, became afterwards compulsory, and the painful expiation of his sin. *Cursed be the earth in thy work; in thy labor thou shalt eat of it all the day of thy life.*¹ In like manner, the other pains and hardships of life will have no end or cessation on this earth; for the consequences of sin are bitter and hard to bear, and they must be with man as long as life lasts. To suffer and to endure, therefore, is the lot of humanity; let men try as they may, no strength and no artifice will ever succeed in banishing from human life the ills and troubles which set it. If any there are who proceed differently — who hold out to a hard people freedom from pain and undisturbed repose, and constant enjoyment — they cheat the people and lie upon them, and their lying promises will only make the evil worse than before. There is nothing more useful done for the world as it really is, than at the same time to look elsewhere for a remedy to its troubles.

The Christian Interpretation of Capital and Labor.

The great mistake that is made in this matter now under consideration is to possess oneself of the idea that capital is naturally hostile to labor, and that rich and poor are intended by nature to be at war with one another. So false is this view, that the exact contrary is the truth. Just as the action of the human body is the result of the disposition of the members of the body, so in a State it is ordained by nature that these two classes should exist in union and agreement, and should, as it were, fit into one another, so as to maintain equilibrium of the body politic. It requires the other; capital cannot do out labor, nor labor will outstrip capital. Agreement results in peaceful and good order; perpetual conflict necessarily produces confusion and calamity. In preventing such strife as will be making it impossible, the Church of Christianity is marvellous and mighty. First of all, there is nothing more powerful than Religion (of which the Church is the interpreter and guardian) in drawing rich and poor together, by reminding each

¹ Genesis iii. 17.

ties of its duties to the other, and especially of the duties of justice. Thus Religion teaches the laboring man and the workman to carry out honestly and well all justifiable agreements freely made never to injure capital, nor to outrage the person or employer; never to employ violence in representing his own cause, nor to engage in riot and disorder; and to have nothing to do with men of evil principles, who work upon the people with artful sophistries, and raise foolish hopes which usually end in disaster and in repentance when too late. Religion teaches the rich man and the employer that their work-people are not their slaves; that they must respect in every man his dignity as a man and as a Christian; that labor is nothing to be ashamed of, if we listen to right reason and to Christian philosophy, but is an honorable employment, enabling man to sustain his life in an upright and creditable way; and that it is shameful and inhuman to treat men like chattels to make money by, or to look upon them merely as so much muscle or physical power. Thus, again, Religion teaches also, as among the workman's concerns of Religion herself, and things spiritual and material, the employer is bound to see that he has time for the duties of piety; that he be not exposed to corrupting influences and dangerous occasions; and that he be not led away to neglect his home and family or to squander his wages. Thus, again, the employer must never call work-people beyond their strength, nor employ them in work unsuited to their sex or age. His great and principal obligation is to give to every one that which is just. Doubtless before we can decide whether wages are adequate, many things have to be considered; but rich men and masters should remember this—that to exercise pressure for the sake of gain upon the indigent and the destitute, and to make one's profit out of the need of another is condemned by all law, human and divine. To demand any one thing more than the just return which is due, is exacting more of Heaven than of the hire of the laborer . . . which you have been taught by your Lord and the erg of the Sabbath, are the commandments of the Lord of the Sabbath; and the rich must religiously refrain from laying down the workman's earnings, either by force, by fraud, or by unjust dealing; and with the more

reason because the poor man is weak and unprotected, and because his slender means should be sacred in proportion to their scantiness.

Were these precepts carefully obeyed and followed, would not strife die out and cease?

But the Church, with Jesus Christ for its Master and Guide, aims higher still. It lays down precepts yet more perfect, and tries to bind class to class in friendliness and good understanding. The things of this earth cannot be understood or valued rightly without taking into consideration the life to come, the life that will last forever. Exclude the idea of futurity, and the very notion of what is good and right would perish; nay, the whole system of the universe would become a dark and unfathomable mystery. The great truth which we learn from Nature herself is also the grand Christian dogma on which Religion rests as on its base—that when we have done with this present life then we shall really begin to live. God has not created us for the perishable and transitory things of earth, but for things heavenly and everlasting; He has given us this world as a place of exile, and not as our true country. Money, and the other things which men call good and desirable—we may have them in abundance, or we may want them altogether; as far as eternal happiness is concerned, it is no matter; the only thing that is important is to use them aright. Jesus Christ, when He redeemed us with plentiful redemption, took not away the pains and sorrows which in such large proportion make up the texture of our mortal life; He transformed them into motives of virtue and occasions of merit: and no man can hope for eternal reward unless he follow in the blood-stained footprints of his Saviour. *If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.*¹ His labors and His sufferings, accepted by His own free will, have marvellously sweetened all suffering and all labor. And not only by His example, but by His grace and by the hope of everlasting recompense, He has made pain and grief more easy to endure; for that which is at present momentary and full of one tribulation, marked for the most measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.²

Christianity Teaches Practically the Right Use of Money.

Therefore, those whom fortune favors

¹ St. James v. 4.

² II. Timothy ii. 12. ² I Corinthians iv. 17.

are warned that freedom from sorrow, and abundance of earthly riches, are no guarantee of the beatitude that shall never end, but rather the contrary;¹ that the rich should tremble at the threatenings of Jesus Christ — threatenings so strange in the mouth of our Lord;² and that a most strict account must be given to the Supreme Judge for all that we possess. The chiefest and most excellent rule for the right use of money is one which the heathen philosophers indicated, but which the Church has traced out clearly, and has not only made known to men's minds, but has impressed upon their lives. It rests on the principle that it is one thing to have a right to the possession of money, and another to have a right to use money as one pleases.

Private ownership, as we have seen, is the natural right of man; and to exercise that right, especially as members of society, is not only lawful, but absolutely necessary. *It is lawful*, says St. Thomas of Aquin, *for a man to hold private property; and it is also necessary for the carrying on of human life.*³ But if the question be asked, How must one's possessions be used? the Church replies without hesitation in the words of the same holy Doctor: *Man should not consider his outward possessions as his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without difficulty when others are in need.* Hence the Apostle saith, *Command the rich of this world . . . to give with ease, to communicate.*⁴ True, no one is commanded to distribute to others that which is required for his own necessities and those of his household; nor even to give away what is reasonably required to keep up becomingly his condition in life; *for no one ought to live unbecomingly.*⁵ But when necessity has been supplied, and one's position fairly considered, it is a duty to give to the indigent out of that which is over. *That which remaineth give alone.*⁶ It is a duty, not of justice (except in extreme case), but of Christian charity — a duty which is not engrafted in human law. But the laws and judgments of men must give place to the law and judgment of Christ, the true law. Who in many ways urges on the practice of almsgiving — *It is more blessed to give than to receive;*⁷ and Who will count a kindness done or

refused to the poor as done or refused to Himself — *as long as you did it to one of My least brethren, you did it to Me.*⁸ Thus to sum up what has been said: — Whoever has received from the Divine bounty a large share of blessings, whether they be external and corporal, or gifts of the mind, has received them for the purpose of using them for the perfection of his own nature, and, at the same time, that he may employ them, as the minister of God's Providence, for the benefit of others. *He that hath a talent, says St. Gregory the Great, let him see that he hideth not; he that hath abundance, let him arouse himself to mercy and generosity; he that hath art and skill, let him do his best to share the use and the utility thereof with his neighbor.*⁹

The Dignity of Labor.

As for those who do not possess the gifts of fortune, they are taught by the Church that, in God's sight poverty is no disgrace, and that there is nothing to be ashamed of in seeking one's bread by labor. This is strengthened by what we see in Christ Himself. Who *when He was rich, for our sakes became poor;* and Who, being the Son of God, and God Himself chose to seem and to be considered the son of a carpenter — *He did not disdain to spend His life as a carpenter.* Nicodemus, *In this the carpenter, the Son of Man.* From the contemplation of this Divine example, it is easy to understand the true dignity and excellency of manual labor in its moral qualities, that is, in this, that virtue is the common inheritance of all, equally within the reach of high and low, rich and poor; and that virtue, not virtue alone, wherever found, will be followed by the rewards of everlasting happiness. Nay, God Himself seems to incline more to those who set evil by. Jesus Christ calls the poor blessed, and lovingly invites those in labor and to come to Him for solace;¹⁰ and He displays the tenderest charity to the rich and oppressed. These relations, if we fail to keep down the pride of the rich, are well off, and to cheer the spirit of the afflicted; to incite the former to generosity, and the latter to temporal renunciation. Thus the separation which

¹ St. Matthew xxv. 40. ² St. Gregory the Great, Hom. ix, in Evangel. n. 7. ³ 2 Corinthians viii. 9. ⁴ St. Mark vi. 3. ⁵ St. Matthew v. 3: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” ⁶ St. Matthew xi. 28: “Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.”

⁷ St. Matthew xix. 23, 24. ⁸ St. Luke vi. 24, 25. ⁹ 2 a 2 e Q. lxvi. Art. 2. ¹⁰ Ibid. Q. lxvi. Art. 2. ⁵ Ibid. Q. xxxii. Art. 6. ⁶ St. Luke xi. 41. ⁷ Acts xx. 35.

would make tends to disappear, nor will it be difficult to make rich and poor join hands in friendly concord.

But, if Christian precepts prevail, the two classes will not only be united in the bonds of friendship, but also in those of brotherly love. For they will understand and feel that all men are the children of the common Father, that is, of God; that it is the same last end, which is God Himself, Who alone can make either men or angels absolutely and perfectly happy; that all and each are redeemed by Jesus Christ, and raised to the dignity of children of God, and are thus united in brotherly ties both with each other and with Jesus Christ, *the firstborn among many brethren*; that the blessings of nature and the gifts of grace belong in common to the whole human race, and that to all, except to those who are unworthy, is promised the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven. *If sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and co-heirs of Christ.*¹

Such is the scheme of duties and of rights which is put forth to the world by the Gospel. Would it not seem that strife must quickly cease were society penetrated with ideas like these?

Social Evils to be Remedied only by
Return to Christian Life and
Institutions.

But the Church, not content with pointing out the remedy, also applies it. For the Church does its utmost to teach and to train men, and to educate them; not by means of its Bishops and Clergy it disseases its salutary teachings far and wide. It strives to influence the mind and heart so that all may willingly yield themselves to be formed and guided by the commandments of God. It is precisely in this fundamental and principal matter, on which everything depends, that the Church has a power peculiar to itself. The agencies which it employs are given it for the very purpose of removing the habits of men, of forming them to Christ, and deriving their strength from God. They alone can touch the human heart and conscience, and bring men to renounce a multitude of sins, to subdue their passions and appetites, to love God and their fellow-men with a love that is unique and supreme, and consequently to break down every barrier which stands in the way of a virtuous life.

¹ Romans viii. 17.

On this subject We need only recall for one moment the examples written down in history. Of these things there cannot be the shadow of doubt; for instance, that civil society was renovated in every part by the teachings of Christianity; that in the strength of that renewal the human race was lifted up to better things—nay, that it was brought back from death to life, and to so excellent a life that nothing more perfect had been known before, or will come to pass in the ages that are yet to be. Of this beneficent transformation, Jesus Christ was at once the first cause and the final purpose; as from Him all came, so to Him all was to be referred. For when, by the light of the Gospel message, the human race came to know the grand mystery of the Incarnation of the Word and the redemption of man, the life of Jesus Christ, God and Man, penetrated every race and nation, and impregnated them with His faith, His precepts, and His laws. And, if Society is to be cured now, in no other way can it be cured but by a return to the Christian life and Christian institutions. When a society is perishing, the true advice to give to those who would restore it is, to recall it to the principles from which it sprung; for the purpose and perfection of an association is to aim at and to attain that for which it was formed, and its operation should be put in motion and inspired by the end and object which originally gave it its being. So that to fall away from its primal constitution is disease; to go back to it is recovery. And this may be asserted with the utmost truth, both of the State in general and of the body of its citizens—by far the greater number—who sustain life by labor.

The Church Seeks the Material Welfare
of The Poor.

Neither must it be supposed that the solicitude of the Church is so occupied with the spiritual concerns of its children as to neglect their material welfare entirely. Its desire is that the poor, for example, should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and should better their condition in this, and for this reason. By the very fact that it calls men to virtue and forms them to its practice, it promotes this in no slight degree. Christian morality, when it is adequately and completely practiced, conduces of itself to temporal prosperity, for it merits the blessing of that God who is the source of

all blessings; it powerfully restrains the lust of possession and the lust of pleasure — twin plagues, which too often make a man without self-restraint miserable in the midst of abundance;¹ it makes men supply by economy for the want of means, teaching them to be content with frugal living, and keeping them out of the reach of those vices, which eat up not merely small incomes, but large fortunes, and dissipate many a goodly inheritance.

Moreover, the Church intervenes directly in the interest of the poor, by setting on foot and keeping up many things which it sees to be efficacious in the relief of poverty. Here, again, it has always succeeded so well that it has even extorted the praise of its enemies. Such was the ardor of brotherly love among the earliest Christians that numbers of those who were better off deprived themselves of their possessions in order to relieve their brethren; whence *neither was there any one needy among them.*² To the order of Deacons, instituted for that very purpose, was committed by the Apostles the charge of the daily distributions; and the Apostle Paul, though burdened with the solicitude of all the churches, hesitated not to undertake laborious journeys in order to carry the alms of the faithful to the poorer Christians. Tertullian calls these contributions, given voluntarily by Christians in their assemblies, *deposits of mercy*; because, to cite his words, they were employed in feeding the needy, in bringing them, in the support of boys and girls destitute of means and deprived of their parents, in the care of the aged, and in the relief of the shipwrecked.³

Thus by degrees came into existence the patrimony which the Church has grafted with religious care as the inheritance of the poor. Nay, to spare them the shame of begging, the common factor of rich and poor has exerted himself to gather together funds for the support of the needy. The Church has set up everywhere the heroism of charity, and has established Congregations of brothers and many other useful institutions for help and mercy, so that there may be hardly any kind of suffering which was not visited and relieved. At the present day there are many who, like the heathen of old, blame and condemn the Church for this beautiful charity.

They would substitute in its place a system of State-organized relief. But no human methods will ever supply for the devotion and self-sacrifice of Christian charity. Charity, as a virtue, belongs to the Church; for it is no virtue unless it is drawn from the Sacred Heart of Christ; and he who turns his back on the Church cannot be true to Christ.

The State's Share in the Relief of Poverty.

It cannot, however, be doubted that to attain the purpose of which We speak, not only the Church, but all human resources must conspire. All who are concerned in the matter must be of one mind, and must act together. It is in this, indeed, Providence which governs the world, that results do not happen save where the causes co-operate.

Let us now, therefore, inquire what part the State should play in the work of remedy and relief.

By the State We here understand, not the particular form of government which prevails in this or that nation, but the State as rightly understood; that is to say, any government controllable by the dictates of right reason and justice, and to those dictates of the Divine word which We have mentioned in the encyclical on the Christian Constitution of States. The first duty, then, of the rulers of the State should be to see that the laws and institutions, which give character and education to the commonwealth, shall be such as to render themselves public welfare and prosperity. This is the proper and wise statesmanship of the heads of the State. Now, if the State prospers and flourishes by a well-regulated family life, by the practice of religion and justice in the conduct and equal distribution of property, by the progress of the arts and sciences, by the abundant provision of food, by everything which makes for a better and happier life, then the power of a rich and populous State, and among the means of helping the poor, is to be exercised, and to be used by the State, and without fear or any suspicion of undue influence. It is the province of the commonwealth to consult for the common good. The more that is done for the working population by the general laws of the country, the less need will there be to

¹ "The root of all evils is cupidity." — I Tim. vi. 10. ² Acts iv. 34. ³ *Apologia Secunda*, xxxix.

seek for particular means to relieve them. There is another and a deeper consideration which must not be lost sight of.

To the State the Interests of all are Equal

whether high or low. The poor are members of the national community equally with the rich; they are real component parts, living parts, which make up, through the family the living body; and it need hardly be said that they are by far the majority. It would be irrational to neglect one portion of the citizens and to favor another; and, therefore, the public administration must duly and solicitously provide for the welfare and the comfort of the working people, or else that law of justice will be violated which ordains that each shall have his due. To cite the wise words of St. Thomas of Aquin: *As the part and the whole are in a certain sense identical, the part may in some sense claim what belongs to the whole.*¹ Among the many and grave duties of rulers who would do their best for the people, the first and chief is to act with strict justice — with that justice which is called in the Schools *distributive* — towards each and every class.

But although all citizens, without exception, can and ought to contribute to the common good in which individuals share so profitably to themselves, yet it is not to be supposed that all can contribute in the same way and to the same extent. No matter what changes may be made in the form of government, there will always be differences and inequalities of condition in the State: Society cannot exist or be conceived without them. Some there must be who dedicate themselves to the work of the commonwealth, who make the laws, who administer justice, whose advice and authority govern the nation in time of peace, and defend it in war, such men clearly occupy the foremost place in the State, and should be held in the highest estimation, for their work makes us more easily and effectively the general interest of the community. Those who hold office, or carry on business in the general welfare in such a position as this; but they do in the most important way benefit the nation, though less directly. We have insisted that, *as it is the end of Society to make man happy, the chief good that Society can bring about is Virtue.* Nevertheless, in

all well-constituted States it is a by no means unimportant matter to provide those bodily and external commodities, *the use of which is necessary to virtuous action.*¹ And in the provision of material well-being, the labor of the poor — the exercise of their skill and the employment of their strength in the culture of the land and the workshops of trade — is most efficacious and altogether indispensable. Indeed, their co-operation in this respect is so important that it may be truly said that

It is only by the Labor of the Working Man that States Grow Rich.

Justice, therefore, demands that the interests of the poorer population be carefully watched over by the Administration, so that they who contribute so largely to the advantage of the community may themselves share in the benefits they create — that being housed, clothed, and enabled to support life, they may find their existence less hard and more durable. It follows that whatever shall appear to be conducive to the well-being of those who work, should receive favorable consideration. Let it not be feared that solicitude of this kind will injure any interest; on the contrary, it will be to the advantage of all; for if cannot but be good for the commonwealth to secure from misery those on whom it so largely depends.

The Christian Idea of a State.

We have said that the State must not absorb the individual or the family; both should be allowed free and untrammeled action as far as is consistent with the common good and the interests of others. Nevertheless, rulers should anxiously safeguard the community and all its parts; the community, because the conservation of the community is so emphatically the business of the supreme power, that the safety of the commonwealth is not only the first law, but it is a Government's whole reason of existence; and the parts, because both philosophy and the Gospel agree in laying down that the object of the administration of the State should be, not the advantage of the ruler, but the benefit of those over whom he rules. The gift of authority is from God, and is, as it were, a participation of the highest of all sovereignties; and it should be exercised as the power of God is exercised — with a fatherly solicitude which reaches to details as well.

Whenever the general interest or any particular class suffers, or is threatened with evils which can in no other way be met, the public authority must step in to meet them. Now, among the interests of the public, as of private individuals, are these: that peace and good order should be maintained; that

¹ St. Thomas of Aquin. *De Regimina Principum*, I. cap. 15.

family life should be carried on in accordance with God's laws and those of nature; that Religion should be revered and obeyed; that a high standard of morality should prevail in public and private life; that the sanctity of justice should be respected, and that no one should injure another with impunity; that the members of the commonwealth should grow up to man's estate strong and robust, and capable, if need be, of guarding and defending their country. If by a strike, or other combination of workmen, there should be imminent danger of disturbance to the public peace; or if circumstances were such that among the laboring population the ties of family life were relaxed; if Religion were found to suffer through the workmen not having time and opportunity to practise it; if in workshops and factories there were danger to morals through the mixing of the sexes or from any occasion of evil; or if employers laid burdens upon the workmen which were unjust, or degraded them with conditions that were repugnant to their dignity as human beings; finally, if health were endangered by excessive labor, or by work unsuited to sex or age--in these cases there can be no question that, within certain limits, it would be right to call in the help and authority of the law. The limits must be determined by the nature of the occasion which calls for the law's interference--the principle being this, that the law must not undertake more, or go further, than is required for the remedy of the evil or the removal of the danger.

Special Consideration Due to the Poor.

Rights must be religiously respected wherever they are found; and it is the duty of the public authority to prevent and punish injury, and to protect each one in the possession of his own. Still, when there is question of protecting the rights of individuals, the poor and helpless have a claim to special consideration. The richer population have many ways of protecting themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State; those who are badly off have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly rely upon the assistance of the State. And it is for this reason that wage-earners, who are, undoubtedly, among the weak and necessitous, should be specially cared for and protected by the commonwealth.

It is, however, it will be advisable to advert especially to one or two of the most important details.

The State Should Safeguard Private Property.

It must be borne in mind that the chief thing to be secured is the safe-guarding, by legal enactment and policy, of private property. Most of all is it essential in these times of covetous greed, to keep the multitude within the line of duty; for if all may justly strive to better their condition, yet neither justice nor the common good allows any one to seize that

which belongs to another, or, under the pretext of futile and ridiculous equality, to lay hands on other people's fortunes. It is most true that by far the larger part of the people who work prefer to improve themselves by honest labor rather than by doing wrong to others. But there are not a few who are imbued with bad principles and are anxious for revolutionary change, and whose great purpose it is to stir up tumult and bring about a policy of violence. The authority of the State should intervene to put restraint upon these disturbers, to save the workmen from their seditions arts, and to protect law-ful owners from spoliation.

The State Must Protect the Laborers' Rights.

When work-people have recourse to a strike, it is frequently because the hours of labor are too long, or the work too hard, or because they consider their wages insufficient. The grave inconvenience of this not uncommon occurrence should be obviated by public remedial measures: for such paralysis of labor not only affects the masters and their work-people, but is extremely injurious to trade, and to the general interests of the public; moreover, on such occasions, violence and disorder are generally not far off, and thus it frequently happens that the public peace is threatened. The laws should be before-hand, and prevent these troubles from arising: they should lend their influence and authority to the removal in good time of the causes which lead to conflicts between masters and the whom they employ.

But if the owners of property must be made secure, the Workmen, too, has property and possessions in which he must be protected; and, first of all, there are his spiritual and mental interests. Life on earth, however good and desirable in itself, is not the true purpose for which man is created; it is only the way and the means to that attainment of truth, and that practice of goodness, in which the full life of the soul consists. It is the soul which is made after the image and likeness of God; it is in the soul that divinity resides, in virtue of which man is created, and to rule the creatures below him, and to rule all the earth and the ocean, for his profit and advantage. *Fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures which move upon the earth.* In this respect all men are equal: there is no difference between rich and poor, master and servant, ruler and ruled, for the *sovereign* is *Lord over all*. No man may outrage with impunity *the human dignity* which God himself *honors with reverence*, nor stand in the way of that higher life which is the preparation for the *eternal* life of Heaven. Nay, more: a man *has here* no power over himself. To consent to any treatment which is calculated to defeat the end and purpose of his being is beyond his

¹ Genesis i. 28. ² Romans x. 12.

right; he cannot give up his soul to servitude; for it is not man's own rights which are here in question, but the rights of God, most sacred and invisible.

From this follows the obligation of the cessation of work and labor on Sundays and other festivals. This rest from labor is not to be understood as mere idleness; much less must it be an occasion of spending money and vicious excess, as many would desire it to be. Yet it should be rest from labor commanded by religion. Repose united with religious observance disposes man to forget for a while the busyness of this daily life, and to turn his thoughts to heavenly things and to the worship which he so strictly owes to the Eternal Deity. It is this, above all, which is the reason and motive of the Sunday rest; a reservation by God's great law of the ancient covenant, *Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath Day,*¹ and taught to the world by His own mysterious "rest" after the creation of man: *He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.*²

Save the Laborers from the Cruelty of Speculators in Labor.

If we turn now to things exterior and corporal, the first concern of all is to save the poor workers from the cruelty of grasping speculators, who use human beings as mere instruments for making money. It is neither humane nor humanity so to grind men down with excessive labor as to stupefy their minds and injure their bodies. Man's powers, by his general nature, are limited, and beyond these limits he cannot go. His strength is developed and increased by use and exercise, but only on condition of due intermission and proper rest. Daily labor, therefore, must be so regulated that it may not be protracted during longer hours than strength admits. Even here, and how long the intervals of rest should be, will depend upon the nature of the work, on circumstances of time and place, and on the health and strength of the workmen. Those who labor in mines and quarries, and in work within the bowels of the earth, should have shorter hours in proportion to their labor, as more severe and more trying labor. Then, again, the season of the year must be taken into account; for not uniformly is a kind of labor always at one time more laborious than at another, or very different kinds of work will not be suitable for a man at different periods of his life, especially a child.

A Rest on Sundays.

Again, he regard to children, great care must be taken not to place them in worksites and factories until their bodies and minds are sufficiently mature. For just as rough weather destroys the buds of spring, so does early an experience of life's hard work deform the young promise of a child's powers, and makes any real education impossible.

¹ Exodus xxviii. 8. ² Genesis ii. 2, 3.

Women, again, are not suited to certain trades; for a woman is by nature fitted for home-work, and it that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty, and to promote the good bringing up of children and the well-being of the family. As a general principle, it may be laid down, that a workman ought to have leisure and rest in proportion to the wear and tear of his strength; for the waste of strength must be repaired by the cessation of work.

In all agreements between masters and work-people, there is always the condition, expressed or understood, that there be allowed proper rest for soul and body. To agree in any other sense would be against what is right and just; for it can never be right or just to require on the one side, or to promise on the other, the giving up of those duties which a man owes to his God and to himself.

Employers' Moral Obligation to Pay Fair Wages.

We now approach a subject of very great importance, and one on which, if extremes are to be avoided, right ideas are absolutely necessary. Wages, we are told, are fixed by free consent; and, therefore, the employer, when he pays what was agreed upon, has done his part, and is not called upon for anything further. The only way, it is said, in which injustice could happen, would be if the master refused to pay the value of the wages, or the workman would not complete the work undertaken; when this happens the State should intervene, to see that each obtains his own—but not under any other circumstances.

This mode of reasoning is by no means convincing to a fair-minded man, for there are important considerations which it leaves out of view altogether. To labor is to exert one's self for the sake of procuring what is necessary for the purposes of life, and most of all for self-preservation. In the sweat of thy brow thou shall eat bread.¹ Therefore, a man's labor has two notes or characters. First of all, it is *personal*; for the exercise of individual power belongs to the individual who puts it forth, employing this power for that personal profit for which it was given. Secondly, man's labor is *necessary*, for without the results of labor a man cannot live; and self-preservation is a law of Nature, which it is wrong to disobey. Now, if we were to consider labor merely as *personal*, it is *personal*, doubtless, it would be within the workman's right to accept any sort of wages whatever; for in the same way it is his right to work or not, so he is free to accept such remuneration or even none at all. But this is a mere abstract supposition; the labor of the working man is not only his personal attribute, but it is *necessary*; and this makes all the difference. The preservation of life is the bounden duty of each and all, and to fail therein is a crime. It follows that each one

¹ Genesis iii. 1.

has a right to procure what is required in order to live; and the poor can procure it in no other way than by work and wages.

Let it be granted, then, that, as a rule, workman and employer should make free agreements, and in particular should freely agree as to wages; nevertheless, there is a dictate of nature more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man, that the remuneration must be enough to support the wage-earner in reasonable and frugal comfort. If through necessity or fear of a worse evil, the workman accepts harder conditions because an employer or a contractor will give him no better, he is the victim of force and injustice. In these and similar questions, however—such as, for example, the hours of labor in different trades, the sanitary precautions to be observed in factories and workshops, etc.—in order to supersede undue interference on the part of the State, especially as circumstances, times, and localities differ so widely, it is advisable that recourse be had to Societies or Boards such as We shall mention presently, or to some other method of safe-guarding the interests of wage-earners; the State to be asked for approval and protection.

The State should Favor Multiplication of Property Owners.

If a workman's wages be sufficient to enable him to maintain himself, his wife, and his children in reasonable comfort, he will not find it difficult, if he is a sensible man, to study economy; and he will not fail, by cutting down expenses, to put by a little property: nature and reason would urge him to do thus. We have seen that this great labor question cannot be solved except by returning as a principle that private ownership must be held sweet and inviolable. The law, therefore, should favor ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many of the people as possible to become owners.

Many excellent results will follow from this; one first of all, property will gradually become more equitably divided. For the effect of civil change and revolution has been to divide society into two widely differing classes. On the one side there is the party which holds the power because it holds the wealth; which has in its grasp all labor and all trade which reciprocally for its own benefit and the sole purpose of the service of society, and which is principally represented in the economy of the state itself. On the other side there is the needy and ignorant multitude, sore and suffering, and always ready for disturbance. If we let this party be unopposed and in full forward to obtaining a share in the land, the result will be that the gulf between vast wealth and deep poverty will be bridged over, and the two orders will be brought nearer together. Another consequence will be the greater abundance of the fruits of the earth. Men always work harder and more readily when they work on that which is their own; nay, they learn to love

the very soil which yields in response to the labor of their hands, not only food to eat, but an abundance of good things for themselves and those that are dear to them. It is evident how such a spirit of willing labor would add to the produce of the earth and to the welfare of the community. And a third advantage would arise from this: each would choose the country in which they were born, for a man would exchange his country for a better land if it were offered him, and thus secure living a tolerable and happy life. These important benefits, however, can only be expected on the condition to be mentioned, that the land be not drained and exhausted by excessive taxation. The right type of a peaceful city is from nature, not from man; and the State has only the right to regulate in the interests of the public good, by means to abolish it altogether. Therefore, if, through taxation, it deprives the private owner more than is just,

Multiply Workingmen's Associations.

In the last place—employees and employers may themselves effect much in the way which We treat, by means of their associations and organizations which afford a timely assistance to those in need, and draw the two orders more closely together. Among these may be cited the associations for mutual help, various forms established by private men, such as the "Society of the Workman," and so forth, created to help in sudden calamity in sickness, and in the event of death; the "Society of the Young," or institutions for the education of boys and girls, for young people, and those of more mature age.

The most important of all are the Associations; for these virtually include the rest. History shows what results were effected by the Association of the former day. They were no doubt of many advantages to the working class, notwithstanding of the difficulties and numerous misgivings connected therewith. Associations should be organized in moments of the age in which we live, of greater instruction, of a more exact and of a more active organization of life. It is gratifying to see that there are actually existing at the present time associations of workers, and of employers together, but it were greatly to be desired that they should multiply and increase in size and effectiveness. We have spoken of these more than once in this encyclical, so far as to say that they are more effective the more they exist in their organization, and increasing by their organization and their work.

The experience of his own weakness urges man to call in help from without. We read in the pages of Holy Writ: *It is better for two should be together than one; for they have the advantage of their society. If one fall he shall be supported by the other.* We

thing that is above me when he putteth his
hand to get him up? And further: A
thing that is as great by his hand as like a
spider's? It is this natural animosity which
exists between civil society, and it is this also
which makes civil societies band themselves together
in confederations of men in with others, associ-
ates which it is now meet to call
societies in the common sense of the word,
which yet are sometimes nevertheless.

These lesser societies and the society which
encompasses the State differ in many things,
because their immediate purpose and end is
different. Civil society exists for the common
good, and, therefore, is concerned with the
interests of all in general, and with individual
interests in their due place and proportion.
Hence, it is called *public* society, because by
its means, as St. Thomas of Aquin says, *Men
communicate with one another in the setting
up of a Commonwealth*.² But the societies
which are formed in the bosom of the State
are called *private*, and justly so, because their
immediate purpose is the private advantage of
the associates. Now, a *private society*, says
St. Thomas again, is one which is formed for
the purpose of carrying out private business;
as when two or three enter into a partnership
with the view of trading in conjunction.³
Particular societies, then, although they exist
within the State, and are each a part of the
same, nevertheless cannot be prohibited by
the State absolutely and as such. Yet to
enter into "society" of this kind is the
natural right of man; and the State must
protect these rights, not destroy them; and
it is not the citizens to form associations, it
contravenes the very principle of its own existence,
not both they and it exist in virtue of
the same principle, viz., the natural propensities
of man to live in society.

These are times, no doubt, when it is right
that the law should interfere to prevent associa-
tions; as when men join together for pro-
tection which is evidently hostile, or for, or
dangerous to the State. In such cases the
State authority may justly forbid the formation
of associations, and may disperse them
as absolutely as can. But every person
is entitled to his right to the rights of
association and to make rules and
ordinances for the purpose of public
order, and this is only done when there is
a manifest violation of law, and when
the law is violated.

The following is David Compton's con-
clusion concerning the result of the Catholic
Association in England:

"...that it is the duty of the State to
protect the people in their right to
associate, and that it is the duty of
the Association to give their members
protection. And as far as it deviates from this
principle, it is called an *illegal* or *unlawful*
association, but rather a *sinful* or
unorthodox one. The principles of
the Catholic Association are
orthodox, and the principles of
the State are also orthodox."

have arisen by the Church's authority and the
piety of the Christian people. The annals of
every nation down to our own times testify to
what they have done for the human race. It is indisputable on grounds of reason alone, that
such associations, being perfectly blameless in
their objects, have the sanction of the law of
nature. On their religious side, they rightly
claim to be responsible to the Church alone.
The administrators of the State, therefore,
have no rights over them, nor can they claim
any share in their management; on the con-
trary, it is the State's duty to respect and
cherish them, and, if necessary, to defend
them from attack. It is notorious that a
very different course has been followed, more
especially in our own times. In many places
the State has laid violent hands on these com-
munities, and committed manifold injustice
against them; it has placed them under the
civil law, taken away their rights as corporate
bodies, and robbed them of their property. In
such property the Church had her rights; each
member of the body had his or her right, and
there were also the rights of those who had
founded or employed them for a definite pur-
pose, and of those for whose benefit and assis-
tance they existed. Whereto-e We cannot
refrain from complaining of such spoliation,
unjust and fraught with evil results; and with
the more reason because, at the very time
when the law prohibits that association is
free to all. We see that *Catholic* society,
however peaceable and useful, are hindered in
every way, whilst the power of the law is given
to men whose objects are to injure, afflict, &
Religion and dangerous to the State.

Societies of every kind, and especially
those of working men, are now more com-
mon than formerly. In regard to most of
these there is no need at present to inquire
whence they spring, what are their objects, or
what means they use. But there is a good
deal of evidence which goes to prove that
many of these societies are in the hands of un-
visible leaders, and are managed in complete
far from compatible with Christianity and the
public well-being; and that only in these has
to get into their hands the wealth of the poor
and to force workingmen to follow them as
slaves. Under these circumstances, working
men must do out of necessities, often
let Christianity in which they are well
accused of the poor, even among
among themselves — in thinkings and
words, and in their conduct, the public welfare
and influence largely crowd. We may well
ask, is it safe to trust such a body
from doing in our country as to make us
second the policy aimed by all who are
adopted?

Catholic-Honest and Progressive Society.

These Catholics are not by any means
and there are but few — who, under existing
what the time requires, save by various
enterprises and experiments, endeavor to
better the condition of the working people
without any sacrifice of principle. They have

taken up the cause of the working man, and have striven to make both families and individuals better off; to infuse the spirit of justice into the mutual relations of employer and employed; to keep before the eyes of both classes the precepts of duty and the laws of the Gospel—that Gospel which, by inculcating self-restraint, keeps men within the bounds of moderation, and tends to establish harmony among the divergent interests and various classes which compose the State. It is with such ends in view that we see men of eminence meeting together for discussion, for the promotion of united action, and for practical work. Others, again, strive to unite working people of various kinds into associations, help them with their advice and their means, and enable them to obtain honest and profitable work. The Bishops, on their part, bestow their ready good-will and support; and with their approval and guidance many members of the clergy, both secular and regular, labor assiduously on behalf of the spiritual and mental interests of the members of Associations. And there are not wanting Catholic possessed of affluence, who have, as it were, cast in their lot with the wage-earners, and who have spent large sums in founding and widely spreading Benefit and Insurance Societies, by means of which the working man can without difficulty acquire by his labor not only many present advantages, but also the certainty of honorable support in time to come. How much this multiplied and ceaseless activity has benefited the community at large is well known to require us to dwell upon it. We find in it the grounds of the most cheering hope for the future; provided that the Associations we have described continue to grow and spread, and are well and wisely administered. Let the State watch over these Societies of citizens united together in the exercise of their right; but let it not thrust itself into their peculiar concerns and their organization; for things move and live by the soul within them, and they may be killed by the grasp of a hand from without.

In order that an Association may be carried on with unity of purpose and harmony of action, its organization and government must be fair and wise. All such Societies, being free to exist, have the further right to adopt such rules and organization as may best conduce to the attainment of their object. We do not deem it possible to enter into definite rules on the subject of organization; this being a perpetual organization, changing, on practice and experience, on the nature and scope of the work to be done, on the magnitude of the union, size, and composition, and on other circumstances of fact and of law—all of which must be carefully weighed.

Found the Organizations on Religion.

Speaking summarily, we may lay it down as a general and perpetual law, that Workmen's Associations should be so organized and governed as to furnish the best and most suitable means for attaining what is aimed

at, that is to say, for helping each individual member to better his condition to the utmost, in body, mind, and property. It is clear that they must pay special and principal attention to piety and morality, and that their integral discipline must be directed precisely by these considerations; otherwise they entirely lose their special character, and come to be very little better than those societies which take no account of Religion at all. What advantage can it be to a Workman to obtain by means of a Society all that he requires, and to endanger his soul for want of spiritual food? *“He doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul.”*

This, as Our Lord teaches, is the main character that distinguishes the Christian from the heathen. *“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice; and these things shall be added unto you.”* Let our Associations, then, look first and always all to God; let religious instruction have therein a foremost place, each one being fully taught what is his duty to God, what to believe, what to hope for, and how to work out his salvation; and let all be well and truly fortified with especial vigilance against erroneous opinions and false-teaching. Let the world be man be urged and led to the worship of God, to the earnest practice of religion, and, among other things, to the sanctification of the Sabbath and festivals. Let him learn to reverence and love Holy Church, the mother of us all; and so to obey the precept given to frequent the Sacraments of the Church, the Sacraments being the chief or ordinary means for obtaining forgiveness of sins and a holy life.

The foundations of the organization laid in Religion, we next go on to discuss the relations of the members, on whom, in order that they may live together in concord, and go on prosperously and successfully. The officers and clerics of the Society should be distributed for the good of the Society itself, and in such manner that they, in degree or position should not interfere with uncertainty and good-will. Officers should be appointed with prudence and discretion, and each man chosen who is carefully minded of the welfare of the members, and suffer wrong. In the conduct and administration of the Society, let them in such way that it may be secure, and in proportion to the number of the members and duties, that each be bound with the care of certain matters, and that the rights and duties of the members be clearly defined. But above all, let a veritable demand of moral behavior be made, which would be more desirable than any. There should be a committee composed of wise and capable men of the Association itself, whose duly it should be, by the laws of the Association, to decide the dispute. Among the purposes of a Society should be to try to arrange for a continuous supply of work

¹ St. Matthew xvi. 26. ² St. Matthew vi. 32, 33.

at all times and seasons; and to create a fund from which the members may be helped in their necessities, not only in cases of accident, but also in sickness, old age, and misfortune.

Such rules and regulations, if obeyed willingly by all, will sufficiently ensure the well-being of poor people; whilst such Mutual Associations among Catholics are certain to be productive, in no small degree, of prosperity to the State. It is not rash to conjecture the future from the past. Age gives way to age, but the events of one century are wonderfully like those of another; for they are directed by the Providence of God, Who over-rules the course of history in accordance with His purposes in creating the race of man. We are told that it was cast as a reproach on the Christians of the early ages of the Church, that the greater number of them had to live by begging or by labor. Yet, destitute as they were of wealth and influence, they ended by winning over to their side the favor of the rich and the goodwill of the powerful. They showed themselves industrious, laborious, and peaceful, men of justice, and, above all, men of brotherly love. In the presence of such a life and such an example, prejudice disappeared, the tongue of malevolence was silenced, and the lying tradititious of ancient superstition yielded little by little to Christian truth.

At this moment the condition of the working population is the question of the hour; and nothing can be of higher interest to all classes of the State than that it should be rightly and reasonably decided. But it will be easy for Christian working men to decide it aright if they form Associations, choose wise guides, and follow the same path which with so much advantage to themselves and the commonwealth was trod by their fathers before them. Prejudice, it is true, is mighty, and so is the love of money; but if the sense of what is just and right be not destroyed by depravity of heart, their fellow-citizens are sure to be won over to a kindly feeling towards men whom they see to be so industrious and so modest, who so unraistably prefer honesty to lucre, and the sacredness of duty to all other considerations.

And another great advantage would result from the state of things We are describing; there would be so much more hope and possibility of recalling to a sense of their duty those working men who have either given up their faith altogether, or whose lives are at variance with its precepts. These men, in most cases, feel that they have been fooled by empty promises, and deceived by little spiritual rulers. They cannot but perceive that their grasping employers too often treat them with the greatest ingratitude, and hardly care for them beyond the profit their labor brings; and if they belong to an Association, it is probably one in which there exists, in place of charity and love, that intestine strife which always accompanies ungodly and irreligious poverty. Often toil and worn down in body, how many

of them would gladly free themselves from this galling slavery! But human respect, or the dread of starvation, makes them afraid to take the step. To such as these, Catholic Associations are of incalculable service, helping them out of their difficulties, inviting them to companionship, and receiving the repentant to a shelter in which they may securely trust.

We have now laid before you, Venerable Brethren, who are the persons, and what are the means, by which this most difficult question must be solved. Every one must put his hand to the work which falls to his share, and that at once and immediately, lest the evil which is already so great may by delay become absolutely beyond remedy. Those who rule the State must use the law and the institutions of the country; masters and rich men must remember their duty; the poor, whose interests are at stake, must make every lawful and proper effort; and since Religion alone, as We said at the beginning, can destroy the evil at its root, all men must be persuaded that the primary thing needful is to return to real Christianity, in the absence of which all the plans and devices of the wisest will be of little avail.

As far as regards the Church, its assistance will never be wanting, be the time or the occasion what it may; and it will intervene with the greater effect in proportion as its liberty of action is the more unfettered: let this be carefully noted by those whose office it is to provide for the public welfare. Every minister of holy Religion must throw into the conflict all the energy of his mind, and all the strength of his endurance; with your authority, Venerable Brethren, and by your example, they must never cease to urge upon all men of every class, upon the high as well as the lowly, the Gospel doctrines of Christian life; by every means in their power they must strive for the good of the people; and above all they must earnestly cherish in themselves, and try to arouse in others, Charity, the mistress and queen of virtues. For the happy results we all long for must be clearly brought about by the plenteous outpouring of Charity; of that true Christian Charity which is the fulfilling of the whole Gospel law, which is always ready to sacrifice itself for others' sake, and which is man's surest antidote against worldly pride and immoderate love of self; that Charity, whose office is described as whose Godlike features are drawn by the Apostle St. Paul in these words: *Charity is patient, is kind, . . . seeketh not her own, . . . suffereth all things, . . . endureth all things.*¹

On each one of you, Venerable Brothers, and on your Clergy and people, as an earnest of God's mercy and a mark of our affection, We lovingly in the Lord beseech the Apostle's Benediction.

Given at St. Peter's in Rome, the fifteenth day of May, 1891, the fourteenth year of Our Pontificate.

LEO XIII., POPE.

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 4-7.

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